

The Budget

years, most families will no longer receive any assistance since this benefit is not indexed to inflation.

The government's proposal will increase aid to children by \$2.1 billion over five years starting January 1, 1993. The Minister of Finance must hope Canadians have forgotten that between 1986 and 1991 the Conservative government reduced this aid by over \$3.5 billion. The new child benefit program still does not give back to Canadian families all the money that the government took from them, and this program completely misses the boat as far as day care is concerned.

All this government's advertising about this new program hides the obvious fact that it has abandoned the commitment it made to a national child care program that would provide facilities for children while their parents had to work.

In addition, the government is proposing to increase the deduction for child care expenses by \$1,000, but obviously this deduction is of no use to families whose income is too low to benefit from it. Furthermore, this program will not take effect for a year. If it provides additional benefits, these will not be made available to Canadian families at a time when they are suffering the consequences of this very serious recession brought on by this government.

On the positive side, the government saw fit to take up the Liberal Party's recommendation on using registered retirement savings plans for buying a first home. Unfortunately the Conservatives neglected to include all the details of this proposal. Besides, when we see how they treated housing, the positive feature of this budget pales by comparison. The Conservatives cancelled the co-operative housing program. They slowed the growth in funding which the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provides for other low income housing programs.

Of course the possibility of using RRSPs and the lower down payment requirements will be useful, but these programs do nothing to help people who cannot afford to invest in RRSPs or even make a 5 per cent down payment to buy a first home. Instead of making it easier for tens of thousands of low income Canadians to own their own homes, this budget makes it much harder for them to have access to decent and affordable housing.

As far as education is concerned, this budget has very little to offer. The government slightly increased education tax credits from \$60 to \$80 per month of full-time study in a post-secondary institution. However, the budget contains no measures to restore the amounts cut in transfers to the provinces for post-secondary education.

These cutbacks mean that far fewer young people will be able to go to university next year. In fact, an increase in the tax credit for post-secondary education will not be much use, if young Canadians cannot be admitted to university because of cuts in transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education, since universities will have to reduce the number of students as a result of these cuts.

Mr. Speaker as you know, the Conservatives have been boring us with their empty slogans ever since they came to power, calling for the country to invest in education and research so it will be better able to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive world. However, what they are saying does not mean a thing, because when we look for concrete commitments in these areas, we soon realize they are involved in a scorched earth operation and are busy turning this country into an empty shell.

The budget is apparently changing the tax system to benefit the corporate sector. However, whatever this budget does to help business will never compensate for the tremendous harm the Conservatives have done to business, especially in the manufacturing sector, with their high dollar and high interest rate policies.

This budget has taken no steps to reduce interest rates. Nor does it address the need to reduce the value of the Canadian dollar. The government seems to want to keep our dollar high, despite protests from companies in the resource sector and from manufacturers who claim that a lower dollar would help make them more competitive on international markets.

The government's attitude has had a devastating impact in my riding. The government's economic policies have wreaked havoc in the forestry sector in my riding, leading to 300 lay-offs in Atholville, while 400 are scheduled at the plant in Dalhousie. Nevertheless, the government stubbornly maintains its disastrous policies.